

In the Claims

Please amend claims 1, 2 and 9 as follows:

1. Process to remove solid slag particles from a mixture of solid slag particles and water present in a quench zone, which quench zone is part of a process for the preparation of synthesis gas by partial combustion of finely dispersed solid carbon-containing fuel with an oxygen-containing gas, by

(a) discharging of the mixture from the quench zone to a first vessel defined by a height to diameter ratio and equipped with conduit means for removing water that is poor in slag particles,

B₁ (b) discharging slag particles from the first vessel to a second vessel by means of gravity, which wherein the second vessel is located below and fluidly connected to said first vessel by means of an open connecting conduit and is further provided with closed means to discharge slag from its a lower end of the second vessel, and

(c) discharging water poor in solid slag particles from the second vessel via a conduit provided with pumping means and having an inlet located such that the water poor in slag particles are is pumped from the second vessel,

(e)(d) fluidly closing the first vessel from the second vessel,

(d)(e) opening of the means to discharge slag from the second vessel to remove slag from the second vessel to a lower pressure zone, and

(e)(f) closing the means to discharge slag from the second vessel and repeating steps (a) to (e)(f).

2. Process according to claim 1, wherein the water poor in slag obtained in step (b)(c) is supplied to the first vessel.

B₂ 9. Process according to claim 1, wherein fresh water is supplied to the second vessel during step (d)(e) and/or (e)(f) resulting in that the second vessel contains fresh water before step (b) is performed.